

# **Selling Honey at Kentucky Farmer's Markets**

**By Phil Craft, KDA State Apiarist**

Regulations for selling honey at Kentucky farmers' markets are the same as for selling honey anywhere in the state. Beekeepers who produce fewer than 150 gallons (about 1,800 pounds) of honey a year are exempt from regulations that require honey to be processed (extracted and bottled) in a certified food processing establishment, or from being required to obtain a permit from the state health department. Most beekeepers in Kentucky are smaller producers and fall under this exemption. However, legal labels are required on all containers of honey that are sold (see below).

If the beekeeper sells 150 gallons or more of honey per year, this honey must be processed in an inspected and permitted food processing facility. Regulations and permits that cover this type of facility are administered by the Kentucky Department for Public Health, Food Safety Branch. Beekeepers needing information on certification of food processing facilities should contact the Food Safety Branch in Frankfort for more information.

## **Legal Honey Labels**

Labels for honey jars, as for all foods in Kentucky, are regulated by the Food Safety Branch of the Kentucky Department for Public Health. The regulations for food labels are contained in KAR (Kentucky Administrative Regulation) 902 45:050. You can view these regulations via the Internet by going to:

<http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/902/045/050.htm>. The Department for Public Health, Food Safety Branch also publishes a helpful pamphlet entitled "A Guide to the Labeling of Food Products in Kentucky," which can be obtained by contacting the Food Safety Branch's office. (See the end of this section for contact information.) However, requirements for honey labels are pretty simple because honey is a single-ingredient product, and because most honey containers are not of unusual shape or size. Here is an outline of the regulations.

- Identity of the product: HONEY
- Quantity of contents: For honey this is most commonly stated in weight - ounces and grams - not pounds, and not volume. You may state pounds if over 16 ounces.
  - A one-pound honey jar label should state Net Wt. 16 ounces (454 grams) or Net Wt. 1 lb. (454 g).
  - A two-pound jar should say Net Wt. 32 ounces (908 grams) or Net Wt. 2 lbs. (908 g).
  - A one-pint jar should say Net Wt. 22 ounces (624 grams) or Net Wt. 1.38 lbs. (624 g).
  - A one-quart jar should say Net Wt. 44 ounces (1.2 kg) or Net Wt. 2.75 lbs. (1.2 kg).

- Name of manufacturer, packer, or distributor: This is your name or your company's name if you use a company name (example: "Cumberland River Honey Farm"). However, I think, from a marketing standpoint, it is also good business to always put your name on the label. If you're selling a local product, people may know your name, but not your company's name.
- Address of Manufacturer, Packer, or Distributor: You must put your address here, including street address, city, state, and zip code. However, if your name (or company name if that is what is on the label) is listed in the local telephone directory, the street address may be omitted. But again, from a marketing standpoint, I think it's a good idea to give your address, AND phone number. If someone eats some of your honey at one of your customers' home (AND LIKES IT!), it is in your best interest to make it obvious that that is YOUR honey, and to make it easy for them to contact you to purchase some.

You may also submit food labels to the Food Safety Branch of the Kentucky Department of Public Health for approval. To do this, merely mail one of each label that you use (one of each size) to: Kentucky Department of Public Health - Food Safety Branch, 275 East Main Street, Frankfort, KY 40621. There is no fee involved in this approval, and it's a helpful service. This approval guarantees that a beekeeper's labels are correct and legal, and will avoid problems when selling honey. Also, if someone is planning on investing in the cost of getting labels printed, it is highly recommend that proofs of the labels be submitted for approval before getting them printed. For any questions about label requirements, or to receive a copy of the Food Branch's pamphlet "A Guide to the Labeling of Food Products in Kentucky," contact the Food Safety Branch's Frankfort office.